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Saint Helena

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

Contents

		Page
	The Territory at a glance	3
I.	Constitutional, legal and political developments	4
II.	Budget	4
III.	Economic conditions	5
	A. General	5
	B. Development	5
	C. Fisheries and agriculture	6
	D. Transport and utilities	6
	E. Banking and credit	7
	F. Tourism	8
IV.	Social conditions	8
	A. General	8
	B. Employment	10
	C. Education	10

Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 29 December 2014. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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D. Environment 11
V. Ascension 12
A. Constitutional and political status 12
B. Economic and social conditions 12
C. Environment 13
VI. Tristan da Cunha 14
A. Constitutional and political status 14
B. Economic and social conditions 14
C. Environment 15
VII. Relations with international organizations and partners 15
VIII. Future status of the Territory 16
A. Position of the territorial Government 16
B. Position of the administering Power 16
IX. Action taken by the General Assembly 17

The Territory at a glance

Territory: Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations, is administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor Mark Capes (since October 2011).

Geography: Saint Helena is a small island of volcanic origin situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1,900 km from Angola and 2,900 km from Brazil. Ascension lies 1,200 km to the north-west of Saint Helena, and Tristan da Cunha and the other small islands lie approximately 2,400 km to the south of Saint Helena.

Land area: 310 km^2, consisting of the islands of Saint Helena and Ascension and the Tristan da Cunha group.

Exclusive economic zone: 1,641,294 km^2.

Population: 4,595 on Saint Helena (March 2014 estimate); and 917 on Ascension and 265 on Tristan da Cunha (November 2012 estimates).

Life expectancy at birth: 76.4 years (women: 79.2 years, men: 72.5 years (2000-2009 estimate)).

Language: English.

Capital: Jamestown.

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Most recent: Saint Helena: July 2013; Ascension: October 2013; Tristan Da Cunha: February 2013.

Legislature: Unicameral legislative assembly (15 seats, 12 elected members).

Gross domestic product per capita: £4,421 (2009/10 estimate).

Economy: Fishing, coffee, tourism, the sale of postage stamps. The economy depends on financial assistance from the United Kingdom.

Unemployment rate: 0.5 per cent (September 2014 estimate), down from 1.8 per cent in 2008.

Monetary unit: Saint Helena pound (SHP).

Brief history: The island of Saint Helena was reportedly discovered in 1502 by a Spanish navigator in the service of Portugal. By the end of the sixteenth century, it had become a port of call for ships en route from Europe to the East Indies. In 1633, it was formally annexed by the Netherlands, however, in 1659 the British East India Company took possession of the island.

I. Constitutional, legal and political developments

1. The current Constitution of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, which entered into force in September 2009, provides for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. The new Constitution changed the name of the Territory from "Saint Helena and its Dependencies" to "Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha", giving the three islands equal status within the Territory. The Head of the Government of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha is the Governor, who is appointed by the British Crown. However, the ability of the Governor to act inconsistently with the wishes of elected Councillors is curtailed in comparison with the previous Constitution. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 provides for the granting of British citizenship to "British overseas territory citizens".

2. The Legislative Council comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, three ex officio members (the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General) and 12 elected members. The Executive Council, which is presided over by the Governor, consists of the ex officio members and five elected members from the Legislative Council. The ex officio members have no vote in either body. Elections are held by secret ballot, at intervals of not more than four years, by universal suffrage for those aged 18 years and over.

3. The 2009 Constitution contains enhanced provisions for ensuring the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive organs of the Government. The judicial system comprises a Court of Appeal, a Supreme Court and such subordinate courts (currently a Magistrates' Court and provisions for coroners' enquiries into sudden deaths) as may be established by ordinance. There remains a final appeal to the Privy Council of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in prescribed circumstances.

II. Budget

4. Owing to a small tax base due in part to migration and an ageing population, Saint Helena depends heavily on the United Kingdom for funding. The European Union also provides funding. Budgetary support from the United Kingdom is used to provide essential public services and to subsidize the dedicated shipping service of the Territory. According to the 2014 Development Assistance Planning Mission, the Overseas Territory Department of the Department for International Development had a target to decrease the proportion of the recurrent budget of the Government of Saint Helena that is financed by the United Kingdom. The Government of the United Kingdom does not allow Saint Helena to borrow funds. As a consequence, grants from the Department and the European Union are the only external public resources available.

5. According to information provided by the administering Power, total budgetary aid and shipping support from the Government of the United Kingdom reached £18.06 million for the financial year 2014-2015, compared with £18.956 million during the previous period, representing a 4.4 per cent decrease. The 2014-2015 aid package was approved in January 2014, following a visit to Saint Helena by representatives of the Department for International Development. Discussions for the next budget review, which will cover a three-year period, commenced in November 2014.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

6. The economy of Saint Helena depends largely on financial assistance from the United Kingdom. The largest employer is the Government of Saint Helena, and the second largest is currently Basil Read, the construction company contracted to construct the airport in Saint Helena. South Africa and the United Kingdom are the two largest sources of imports. The next largest sector for employment is retail and services. The local population also earns income from fishing, raising livestock and selling handicrafts. According to the administering Power, unemployment is very low, with new jobs currently available as a result of the building of the airport. Consequently, incomes have grown strongly over the past two years, a period during which inflation has decreased significantly, with the retail price index averaging 1.2 per cent during 2013 and 2014. However, incomes are still comparatively low, and the cost of living is high, since most goods must be imported. As a consequence, prices are heavily influenced by external factors. Saint Helena expects that the opening of its airport, the construction of which started three years ago, will develop its economy by significantly increasing the number of tourists. In preparation for that influx, the Government has carried out a three-year project to develop the policy and institutional frameworks required to deliver a range of core public services in an efficient and effective manner. According to the administering Power, the project is aimed at strengthening governance and ensuring effective policymaking, strategic planning and performance management, as well as developing a comprehensive set of policies and processes to attract, retain, manage and develop the necessary human resources.

B. Development

7. Saint Helena is eligible to receive funds from the European Union. On Saint Helena, the funds will be used (on a cost-sharing basis with the Department for International Development) to build a safer landing facility in Rupert's Bay, which will allow large vessels to dock directly at the wharf. This is primarily for freight services. On Ascension, the allocation has been used to improve the roads. On Tristan da Cunha, the funds will be used for further improvements to the harbour, the investigation of alternative energy potential, upgrading of the water works, the improvement of waste management and the electricity distribution infrastructure and building capacity in the management of the lobster-processing plant. Development assistance from the Department for International Development is provided to support a programme of infrastructure improvements, based on priorities agreed with elected members.

8. Saint Helena has established a position for an emergency planner (formerly disaster management executive) responsible for the development and maintenance of plans for the island. These arrangements are overseen by the Chief of Police, who reports directly to the Governor. Civil contingency arrangements for Saint Helena broadly follow the principles of the United Kingdom Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Arrangements replicate, as far as practical, those found in the United Kingdom, but are adjusted to suit local needs. A Major Incident Response Plan has been produced, which provides a generic response in case of a major incident. This plan is being

supplemented by a suite of risk-specific plans, the development of which will continue over the next 18 to 24 months. The governance of contingency planning arrangements for Saint Helena will be managed through a resilience forum, which will start in January 2015. Participants in the forum will meet on a quarterly basis and will oversee: the risk register (existing and emerging threats); the development of contingency plans; testing and exercising; organizational learning through post-exercise feedback; and training.

C. Fisheries and agriculture

9. Fisheries are an important sector of the economy of Saint Helena. According to the United Kingdom, there are 29 fishing boats with commercial licences, however, because of the continued poor fishing season in 2014, only five boats fished on a regular basis during the year. The local fishermen sell their catch to the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation. Fish purchases for the first half of the financial year 2014-2015 amounted to 156.87 tons, compared with 56.55 tons during the same period the previous year. No licences for foreign fishing vessels have yet been issued during the financial year 2014-2015. In April 2014, two local fishing businesses began fishing operations in the offshore waters of Saint Helena's exclusive economic zone. Initial results have been very promising with a total amount of 52.3 tons being caught over 13 trips, with an average duration of 4 days per trip.

10. Saint Helena has developed a reputation for the high quality of its coffee. In 2012 and 2013, 3,327 kg of Arabica green-tipped Bourbon beans were exported. More recent data regarding the export of coffee have not been available from exporters.

11. With regard to farming, there has been continued innovation in the form of covered production and hydroponics, with 49,400 ft^2 of polytunnel infrastructure now used for arable crops and salad production. The introduction by the Government of Saint Helena in 2012 of a public-private agricultural partnership policy, designed to encourage a scaling-up of production activities from small-holder farms towards the development of agricultural businesses, has encouraged a few enterprises to expand their operations in arable crops and egg production. This has involved some risk-sharing with the private sector in order to accelerate increases in the production of salad vegetables and eggs, areas of production in which the island enjoys a comparative advantage.

D. Transport and utilities

12. Access to Saint Helena is provided by the Royal Mail Ship *Saint Helena*, which serves Saint Helena, Ascension and Cape Town, South Africa. The vessel has been in service for 24 years and is increasingly expensive to operate. While the only port, Jamestown, provides good anchorage; the landing facilities do not allow passengers of large cruise vessels to come ashore in all types of weather. Construction of a wharf is currently under way in Rupert's Bay and the bulk of the construction work is expected to be completed in late 2015. It is hoped that the wharf will enable the separation of cargo and passenger operations.

13. As noted above, the development of an airport is also under way. This includes a runway, an apron area, a terminal building and supporting airside and landside facilities. An access road connecting the airport site to the port facilities in Rupert's Bay and an inshore sea rescue service are also requirements under the airport project. The contractual completion date of the project is February 2016. The project will also provide a new bulk fuel installation, enhancing the island's fuel storage capacity for ground fuels and providing storage capacity for aviation fuel for the first time. According to the administering Power, the opportunities enabled by air access should eventually make the island financially independent, freeing it from reliance on funding from the United Kingdom and the European Union.

14. The Territory has approximately 168 km of paved roads (118 km on Saint Helena, 40 km on Ascension and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha) and 30 km of unpaved roads (20 km on Saint Helena and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha).

15. Saint Helena has two local radio stations and satellite television stations that are rebroadcast terrestrially. Ascension has one local radio station and receives relays of broadcasts from Saint Helena. Broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service are available, as are television services for the United States military. Tristan da Cunha has one local radio station and receives television and radio broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service. At the end of November 2014, there were 1,240 Internet subscribers in Saint Helena and 348 on Ascension.

16. Saint Helena has benefited from upgrades to its electricity infrastructure under projects funded by the Department for International Development. In addition, wind power has become a reliable source of energy on Saint Helena. In April 2014, the fleet of wind turbines doubled in capacity, with approximately 20 per cent of the island's demand now satisfied by wind power. The small-scale solar schemes, which generate slightly less than 1 per cent of the island's electricity, are to be supplemented by a solar farm with a peak capacity of 500 kW, scheduled for completion in March 2015.

17. The Department for International Development has provided funding for water infrastructure upgrades. Work currently funded and in progress is the supply of treated water to the Sandy Bay properties. The institutional arrangements for the delivery of utility services changed on 1 April 2013, with the Government of Saint Helena divesting the provision of electricity, water and sewage service to a company limited by shares and initially wholly owned by the Government. Improved waste-management practices are being implemented to put in place the infrastructure, facilities, systems and procedures required to establish an effective long-term solid-waste management strategy for Saint Helena. The redevelopment, which includes infrastructure for the management of hazardous wastes through the operation of a containerized incinerator and hazardous waste cell and the development of a civic recycling area, also addresses the potential bird-strike risk that the landfill presents in the context of the operation of the island's new airport.

E. Banking and credit

18. In December 2008, new ordinances on financial services and money-laundering came into force, aimed at ensuring that Saint Helena complies with international obligations while safeguarding residents from fraudulent financial service providers.

19. The Bank of Saint Helena is the sole banking entity. As at 31 March 2013, total deposit balances stood at £68 million. The bank's net assets total £4.9 million.

F. Tourism

20. According to the administering Power and the Government of Saint Helena, the new airport is the best way to bring new financial opportunities to the island and promote tourism. With the airport, it is estimated that up to 30,000 tourists will eventually visit the island each year, stimulating growth in the economy. The rugged natural beauty of the Territory, its rare wildlife and its historic sites, such as Napoleon's tomb, are expected to attract visitors. Of the 3,800 passengers who arrived on the Royal Mail Ship *Saint Helena* in 2013/14, around 700 were excursion (i.e. leisure) visitors. A further 615 visitors arrived on yachts and more than 3,200 arrived on cruise ships. In the first year of air access, from February 2016, 2,000 leisure visitors are anticipated, rising to 7,700 by 2021.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

21. Following the reintroduction of granting British citizenship to Saint Helenians in 2002, the island experienced an exodus. Many working-age adults moved overseas, resulting in an ageing population and a declining birth rate. Evidence of this was clear in the 2008 population census, which revealed that the population had declined by approximately 20 per cent since the 1998 census, to reach 3,981 individuals, with significant reductions in virtually all age brackets below 55. The median age of the population increased from 33 in 1998 to 44 in 2008, and there were just 22 children per 100 working age adults, compared to 44 in 1987 and 32 in 1998. While child dependency had halved, aged dependency had nearly doubled. By 2008, there were 26 people aged over 64 years per 100 working age adults, a rise of 53 per cent. The initiation of the air access project has seen a reversal of the trend, and an increasing number of Saint Helenians are returning to the island to take advantage of improved employment and business development opportunities. The estimated total population stood at 4,595 in March 2014, of which 4,100 were Saint Helenian.

22. Measured by international standards, Saint Helena is a middle-income Territory with few signs of real material poverty. While absolute poverty is low, there are growing concerns regarding income inequality and poverty of aspiration as the economy grows. Overall incomes grew strongly between 2011 and 2013, with the median average income growing by 4.3 per cent, to £6,760, and mean average income growing by 10 per cent, to £7,900. However, those in the second to fourth deciles saw weak or negative growth in their real incomes. Consequently, while income inequality is still low in global terms, with a Gini coefficient of 26.5, this was an increase from 2011/12, when it stood at 24.4.

23. The ageing population of the Territory has increased the need for substantial investment in a new elderly care programme. According to the United Kingdom, in November 2014, 640 persons were receiving a basic island pension and 152 people income-related benefits. In December 2013, both benefits were uprated to meet a

new minimum income standard based on a basket of essential items needed to maintain an agreed minimum standard of living.

24. The Welfare of Children Ordinance came into force in March 2010. The island's Safeguarding Children's Board continues to develop and has members from all relevant agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). According to the administering Power, the Board will continue to develop robust multi-agency working arrangements and support the delivery of safeguarding training across the island.

25. The Lucy Faithful Foundation conducted a child safety review during a visit to Saint Helena and Ascension in 2013 to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. The review, with an executive summary made available in September 2013, recognized the progress made and identified areas where more remained to be done. A number of recommendations were made by the reviewers, including how to challenge the targeting of girls for sex, the use of the jury system in sexual abuse cases, the use of protocols for investigating sexual crime, the instigation of a treatment regime in prison and the introduction of an initiative called "Circles of support and accountability".

26. According to the administering Power, the recommendations of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation report are currently being implemented by the relevant agencies. Since 1 December 2014, the Government of Saint Helena has been developing a Safeguarding Directorate with the objective of protecting and safeguarding vulnerable children, young people and adults at risk or suffering from abuse. Saint Helena has been developing safeguarding arrangements for all vulnerable people, including children. This work is led by the Safeguarding Children's Board, whose membership comprises the police, education workers, health workers, NGOs and the newly formed Safeguarding Directorate. The Government has also employed a number of professionals in these key agencies to improve safeguarding arrangements, and new investments have been made in training front-line staff. The multi-agency working arrangements are developing well. Owing to improved processes, the island has seen an increase in referrals, investigations and prosecutions relating to sexual offences involving children and young people. More expert staff is being recruited to deal with the increase in referrals and the backlog of cases, which need to be addressed. A training programme for all people working with children is being developed and training has already begun in such areas as achieving best evidence (including a new interview suite), protective parenting and general awareness of safeguarding issues. There is also a public awareness campaign on the sexual exploitation of children. According to the administering Power, more remains to be done and, following allegations about a conspiracy to cover up child abuse on the island, Queen's Counsel Sasha Wass will be leading an independent inquiry. She will report to the Government of the United Kingdom by mid-2015.

27. There is one general hospital in Jamestown, as well as three health clinics serving people living in rural areas, and two residential units providing care and support for individuals with learning and physical disabilities. In addition, the island has a family centre for children and young people who need protection and supported accommodation in two locations for vulnerable people.

B. Employment

28. According to the administering Power, the Government of Saint Helena employs 17 per cent of the resident population, as of October 2014, having conducted a programme of divestment and headcount reduction in preparation for air access. Other large employers include Basil Read (airport construction project) and Solomon and Company (retail, shipping and financial services). The majority of employment elsewhere is in the retail, infrastructure (telecommunications, electricity and water) and services sectors. The accommodation and hospitality and agricultural production sectors are growing but, at present, these comprise primarily owner-operated businesses that employ relatively few people. A minimum wage for Saint Helena was introduced in June 2013 and set at £2.30 per hour (equivalent to around 62 per cent of the median income). In addition, the Government is about to enact new legislation to regulate the terms and conditions under which people are employed, with a first phase including paid holiday and sick leave.

29. A significant number of Saint Helenians are employed offshore, particularly on Ascension, in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)[1] or in the United Kingdom. Many contracts for offshore employment are for unaccompanied workers, resulting in a significant social burden and the dislocation of families. In addition, according to the administering Power, the loss of trained staff to better-paid offshore employment makes it necessary to bring in a range of internationally recruited staff in a number of sectors.

30. As a result of the construction of the airport, which started in late 2011, the demand for workers increased significantly. In November 2014, 353 Saint Helenians were employed on the project either directly or through subcontractors. Of these, 70 have returned from abroad to work on the project. With only 13 individuals in receipt of unemployment allowance (September 2014), equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the economically active population, the lack of additional labour-force capacity constrains private sector growth. At the same time, with evidence of low levels of labour productivity, there is the potential for economic growth resulting from investment-led productivity gains.

C. Education

31. Education is compulsory and free for children between 5 and 16 years of age. There are currently four schools in operation, comprising three all-through primary schools (for pupils aged 3-11 years) and one secondary school (for students aged 11-18 years). Students over 16 may opt for United Kingdom-accredited academic or vocational courses. Since September 2009, distance-learning opportunities have been included in the curriculum of the secondary school. The Education and Employment Directorate is also responsible for the training and retraining of people in the public and private sectors, through its Adult and Vocational Education Service. Education standards on Saint Helena are beginning to rise after a recent period of gradual decline.

[1] A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

32. Retaining qualified, experienced staff continues to be a challenge. A plan and training are now in place to raise the overall quality of teaching through professional development.

33. In 2014, 49 per cent of pupils achieved five or more General Certificates of Secondary Education with a grade C or higher, including in English and mathematics, compared to 19 per cent in 2012. Primary education standards continue to improve, particularly in reading and writing, where 60 per cent and 57 per cent achieved United Kingdom standards. Overall, however, primary standards still lag some way behind United Kingdom benchmarks, particularly in mathematics.

D. Environment

34. According to the administering Power, the isolated position of Saint Helena has given rise to an unusual and remarkable array of terrestrial and marine flora and fauna. Saint Helena has a high level of endemicity and approximately 30 per cent of species endemic to the United Kingdom and its overseas territories are found there. As more baseline biodiversity surveys are undertaken, and the knowledge and understanding of species increase, new endemic species may be found. Both the natural and cultural heritage of Saint Helena are its key assets and a key building block on which to establish a tourism industry, although, both areas have been negatively affected by a lack of investment over a long period of time. Saint Helena relies heavily on project funding to support conservation initiatives. In late 2013, the island was successful in receiving the approval of five bids for funding totalling £297,217 under the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (Darwin Plus). In 2014, the island received approval for three bids totalling £519,316.

35. While waste management continues to be a challenge for the island; a capital-funded solid-waste management project is introducing improvements. Currently, most waste streams are still going to landfill, with metals, glass and kitchen waste making up two-thirds of this. According to the administering Power, there is a potential opportunity for the private sector to develop businesses that process and reuse waste materials.

36. The first environmental legislation will be introduced in 2015. However, according to the administering Power, with the environment being a key selling point for tourism and the new infrastructure investment required to support the tourism industry significantly increasing the level of environmental risk on the island, there is a need to increase efforts in monitoring, safeguarding, development and enforcement.

37. The United Kingdom Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy has been devised as a key tool to enable the United Kingdom and overseas territorial Governments to meet the relevant international obligations for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. In April 2014, a report was published about ongoing and planned activities that are supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom, as well as its statutory adviser the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, in each of the areas under the Strategy. The report covered, inter alia, activities in Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Malvinas),[1] Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena and Turks and Caicos Islands.

38. In April 2014, the United Kingdom submitted its fifth national report to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The report contains information in respect of the overseas territories to which the Convention has been extended, namely British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Gibraltar and Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

V. Ascension

A. Constitutional and political status

39. Executive authority for Ascension is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. A resident Administrator is appointed by and reports to the Governor. The Governor is advised by an Island Council, comprising seven elected members and three ex-officio members: the Administrator, the Director of Resources and the Attorney General. Ex-officio members have no voting rights. The current Administrator of Ascension, Marc Holland, was sworn in on 26 August 2014. The Administrator represents the Governor of the Territory, is the Head of the Government of Ascension and, as an ex-officio member, chairs the Island Council in the Governor's absence.

40. Elections are held every three years, the most recent general election having taken place in October 2013. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor continues to have legislative authority over Ascension. However, he is constitutionally required to consult the Island Council before making any laws. Ascension has its own legislation but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary.

41. There are five full-time Saint Helena police officers on detachment to Ascension, including the senior officer of inspector rank who reports to the Director of Police on Saint Helena. The Chief Magistrate on Saint Helena serves as the Magistrate on Ascension, supported by four local lay magistrates. The Saint Helena Public Solicitor provides legal advice to residents and is supported by five local lay advocates.

42. In June 2010, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf denied a claim submitted by the United Kingdom for a continental shelf area beyond 200 nautical miles in respect of Ascension, in accordance with the provision set out in article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Commission concluded that the volcanic pinnacle on which Ascension rests was too slender to generate rights to an extended zone of the submerged continental shelf.

B. Economic and social conditions

43. According to the administering Power, the population of Ascension enjoys full employment. Services are mostly provided by the Government. A private sector company provides the water and electricity supply to most of the island, with the United States base providing its own supply. There are no commercial exports and little indigenous food production. The Island's economy is somewhat fragile and is

dependent upon the defence and communication organizations based on the island. As a result of the economic situation, the population has dropped to under 900 people. Government activities are funded through business levy, property tax, income tax and Customs duties. The revenues raised cover the expenditure necessary for the provision of essential public services. There is a continued requirement to invest in the Island's infrastructure, balanced with the need to create sufficient liquid reserves. Funding from the eleventh European Development Fund has allowed for the resurfacing of eight kilometres of main roads. Funding has been allocated for critical works to the pier head, establishing a modern waste management facility and the continuation of road resurfacing.

44. Offshore fishing licences were sold from June 2010 to January 2013. A total of 170 licences were sold over the period and, according to the administering Power, contributed significantly to the economy. The sale of licences was placed on hold in 2014 while an expert study was carried out to review a management approach allowing the Government to develop income through licensing, improve management of its fish stocks, meet its international obligations and protect wider biodiversity. There are a small number of inshore fishing boats providing the local community with fresh fish. Sport fishing continues to develop, bringing more visitors to the island each year.

45. Health services are provided through the fully functioning Georgetown hospital. If treatment is not possible locally, cases are referred to the United Kingdom. In support of a healthy lifestyle, two gyms on both military bases, three swimming pools and other sporting facilities are available to all islanders.

46. The school in Two Boats provides education to all children from the age of 3 to 16, which is the General Certificate of Secondary Education level. A Safeguarding Children's Board is in place and members include a social worker and representatives from the police and the health and education sectors. There are a number of groups and clubs available to children outside of school and a community centre was opened in Two Boats in 2014 through funding from various sources and the help of volunteers. It features a variety of equipment for band and music, exercise, art, movies and games.

C. Environment

47. In its fifth national report to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, submitted in April 2014 (see para. 38 above), the United Kingdom noted that biodiversity did not represent a great contribution to the local economy, with the exception of offshore marine fishery, which was a significant revenue source from licence fees. The Island has the second largest nesting population of the green turtle in the Atlantic Ocean and the largest nesting population of any marine turtle species in all of the United Kingdom overseas territories. The biodiversity of Ascension is greatly threatened by alien invasive species, and by introduced plants and mammals in particular.

48. The Conservation Department continues to develop and has succeeded in implementing a number of projects, such as programmes dealing with seabirds, invasive species, endemic plants, land crabs and fisheries. Partners in those projects are: the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Darwin Initiative, the Overseas Territories Environment Programme and the Joint Nature Conservation

Committee. With the establishment of the National Park of Green Mountain, there are now six nature reserves, grouped as beach and bird nature reserves. A Biodiversity and Fisheries Protection Committee has been set up to work with the Conservation Department and stakeholders in order to formulate legislation for the protection of the island's biodiversity and fisheries. A low volume of tourism is also developing within this sector.

VI. Tristan da Cunha

A. Constitutional and political status

49. Executive authority for Tristan da Cunha is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. A resident Administrator is appointed by and reports to the Governor. The Administrator is advised by an Island Council, comprising the Administrator, who is President of the Council, eight elected members (including a Chief Islander and at least one woman) and three appointed members. Elections are held every three years. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor continues to have legislative authority over Tristan da Cunha, but, for the first time, is constitutionally required to consult the Island Council before making any laws.

50. Tristan da Cunha has its own legislation, but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary. As a last resort, the laws of England and Wales apply. There are two special constables and one full-time police officer. The Administrator also serves as the Magistrate.

B. Economic and social conditions

51. The economy of Tristan da Cunha is based on traditional subsistence farming and fishing. Rock lobster is sustainably fished and exported to Australia, the European Union, Japan and the United States of America. The decision by the European Union in August 2014 to allow access to its market to lobsters from Tristan da Cunha was a major milestone.

52. Since 2007, Tristan da Cunha has enjoyed improved telecommunications. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office funds the line rental charge for the service. Telephone services are reliable and available to all households. Further improvements to the island's telecommunications were made in 2011 and 2012. Internet access is now available to the community through an Internet cafe and a Wi-Fi system.

53. In 2009, the Island Council set out broad strategies to secure the island's financial future. According to the United Kingdom, even with such reforms, the island would very soon become insolvent unless further drastic measures were taken. In 2011, a thorough review of budgets was undertaken and strict rules on procurement and expenditure were introduced. The island forecast a surplus of revenue over expenditure in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. According to the administering Power, external financial assistance with infrastructure projects

continues to be needed. In 2014, the Department for International Development approved a project to construct and equip a new hospital.

54. The Department for International Development funds the position of resident doctors. In order to build capacity on the island, it also funds the positions of a clinical nurse, a new Finance Officer, a new Commercial Officer, the Education Adviser and the Director of Public Works. The Department also sponsors annual dental and biennial optometrist visits as well as visits with other medical specialists, as and when required. It has been a number of years since Tristanians had access to off-island training, but, since 2012, the Department has also funded training both on and off the island (the latter in the Isle of Man and South Africa). This training has been provided across the Tristan Administration covering the following areas: fisheries, tourism, post office services, public works, communications and information technology.

55. Pupils leave school at the age of 16 and tend to work in the Government or the fishing sector. They have no opportunity to proceed to higher education unless they leave the Territory. The current staff members are, by their own admission, poorly trained. There are now two trainee teachers in the pipeline. In September 2009, an Education Adviser sponsored by the Department for International Development began a two year posting on the island, during which he delivered training to local teachers. Since that time, two further Education Advisers have been appointed and it is hoped that a new primary school teacher will be recruited in 2015.

C. Environment

56. Tristan da Cunha is successfully implementing a number of conservation projects, with help from its partners, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The projects run by Overseas Territory Environmental Programme include efforts to remove invasive species from uninhabited islands in the Tristan da Cunha group and studies on the feasibility of eradicating rodents. Tristan da Cunha also has a biodiversity action plan to help it to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This was updated in 2012 to cover a five-year period, until 2017.

57. According to the fifth national report of the United Kingdom to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (see para. 38 above), the islands of the Tristan da Cunha archipelago are of high significance in terms of global biodiversity. The main threats to biodiversity that have been identified include: invasive species; overfishing and illegal fishing; the isolated location of the islands; and their finite resources. Since the local economy depends largely on income from a lobster fishery, any negative impact on this fishery would have important consequences on the islanders.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

58. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are associated with, but not part of, the European Union. The Territory is a member of the South Atlantic Territories Cooperation Forum.

59. Since January 2014, the Territory has been a partner of the European Union under Council decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013 on the association of overseas countries and territories with the European Union, which was approved in an effort to move away from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the European Union in the wider world.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

60. Information on political and constitutional developments regarding the status of Saint Helena is reflected in section I above.

B. Position of the administering Power

61. On 10 October 2014, at the 5th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was modern and based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each territory to determine whether to remain British. Should the people of a territory choose to remain British, the United Kingdom would maintain and deepen its special relationship with them.

62. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, the United Kingdom had been working closely with the territories to develop that partnership further. His Government had a fundamental responsibility to ensure the security and good governance of its overseas territories. The United Kingdom had strengthened the annual meeting with territory leaders into a Joint Ministerial Council and had given it a clear mandate to lead work to review and implement the strategy and the commitments set out in the white paper.

63. At the third meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 2 and 3 December 2014, the United Kingdom and overseas territory leaders agreed upon a communiqué that included the following passage setting out the joint position of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories on self-determination:

> The peoples of all the Territories have the right of self-determination. For those Territories with permanent populations who wish it, the United Kingdom will continue to support requests for the removal of the Territory from the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Territory Governments are politically accountable to their legislatures for the exercise of devolved areas of policy. We will continue to work together to develop governmental and democratic institutions so that Territories have the greatest self-government possible, compatible with the United Kingdom's obligations in respect of its sovereign responsibilities.

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

64. On 5 December 2014, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 69/105 A and B without a vote, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2014 (A/69/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. Section IX of resolution 69/105 B concerns Saint Helena. In that section, the General Assembly:

(a) Stressed the importance of the 2009 Constitution of the Territory and the further development of democratic and good governance;

(b) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter of the United Nations, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(c) Requested the administering Power and relevant international organizations to continue to support the efforts of the territorial Government to address the socioeconomic development challenges of the Territory.